

**Briefing Paper to the Early Support and Lifelong Learning
Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
9 December 2019**

Wards: All

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – SEND Sufficiency Strategy and
Planning**

Briefing Paper of the Interim Manager for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) on behalf of the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Family Services

1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Commission with the opportunity to consider the feedback received following the consultation on the draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy prior to formal publication. It also provides the Commission with updated information in respect of the actions that have been taken to address the demand for specialist places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the city since the last report it considered in June 2019. The draft strategy is attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. Background Information:

- 2.1 The overall number of pupils at Hull school has increased over recent years due to the increasing school age population, and therefore the number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and who need a place in specialist provision, (a special school or specialist resource provision) has also increased. The growth in demand for specialist places however is greater than the growth in demand for mainstream places.
- 2.2 Hull's existing special schools for Severe Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Disorder / Speech, Language and Communication Needs in particular have been expanded and adapted. They are now at capacity and cannot accommodate more pupils. This makes it harder for those pupils who need specialist provision to access it.
- 2.3 A strategy to meet demand has been developed in consultation with a number of key partners including Headteachers of special and mainstream schools, and parents and young people with SEND. The draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy has in it five priority

areas for development: Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Autism and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (ASD/SLCN), Early Years, Post 16 and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). In addition, from April 2018, planning has taken place to identify how the immediate shortfall and longer term need for specialist school places can be met.

- 2.4 In respect of SLD, in October 2018, the Local Authority successfully applied for a 125 place SLD free school. This will address the future need for SLD places and also manage the additional numbers currently placed at Ganton and Tweendykes Academies in recent years. We hope the new school will become operational in September 2021. Plans have progressed during 2018 and 2019 to address the demand in the shorter term by setting up a Tweendykes Academy satellite base and undertaking adaptations to the Ganton Academy buildings.
- 2.5 In respect of ASD/SLC, Hull has a smaller percentage of pupils accessing places in mainstream specialist resource provision than other Local Authorities. The initial plan to meet the increasing need for specialist provision for pupils with SLCN and /or ASD is to develop integrated resourced provision in both primary and secondary schools across the city. Bricknell Primary Academy and Spring Cottage Primary Academy have both now established 10-place provisions, and Kelvin Hall Secondary Academy is developing a 10 to 15 place provision to open in September 2020 as part of a new-build project. It is planned to develop at least three more primary and one more secondary provision.
- 2.6 For pupils with SEMH needs, Bridgeview Primary SEMH Special Academy is co-located on the same site as the Whitehouse Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in the West of the city. Euler Free School, a new 5 to 11 Alternative Provision, is planned to open in the East of the city in 2020 or 2021. Further planning will take place with the provider and other stakeholders about how the increase in demand for primary SEMH special school places could be accommodated within this provision. Oakfield, the secondary SEMH School with residential provision attached, is predicted to reach capacity in the 2019/20 academic year. Numbers can be further increased at this site but other options to consider include a second secondary SEMH school in the west of the city, use of Alternative Provision and SEMH resource provision. It is expected that a report will be presented to Cabinet regarding Oakfield School in February 2019.
- 2.7 For children in Early Years, and in response to the increased levels of need in Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings, it is proposed that an enhanced setting is established in each of the three main localities of Hull - east, north and west. For Post-16 young people it is anticipated that the three SLD schools, in partnership with local colleges and other providers, will each develop a creative post-16 offer. In addition, we will consider how the needs of the 'vulnerable but more able' group of young 16+ people can be better met. This will include partnerships with local further education providers and work to promote the employment of young people with SEND especially via a wider range of supported internships and other employer-based schemes.
- 2.8 Feedback was sought on the draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy between 10 September and 11 October 2019. A summary document and feedback sheet was sent to all

parents and carers of a child with an EHC plan, three information sessions were held, information was circulated to schools and other key partners, and the online survey was promoted via local media, including the Hull Daily Mail and a local TV station. There were 330 responses in total and the vast majority of respondents were parents of a child with SEND with needs relating to SLCN and/ or ASD.

2.9 Respondents were asked how much they agreed with proposals in the draft Strategy as follows:

- Increase places for pupils with severe learning difficulties by building a new 125 place free school for pupils with severe learning difficulties – 85% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with speech language and communication needs and Autism by developing integrated resourced provision in more primary schools – 85% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with speech language and communication needs and autism by developing integrated resourced provision in more secondary schools- 82% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by developing integrated resourced provision in primary schools – 80% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by commissioning primary SEMH places from Euler Free School – 71% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by increasing the number of places at Oakfield Special School (secondary) – 76% agreed or strongly agreed;
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by developing integrated resourced provision in secondary schools – 79% agreed or strongly agreed
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by developing a second secondary SEMH special school (if possible) – 84% agreed or strongly agreed
- Increase places for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs by commissioning more places in secondary alternative provision settings – 75% agreed or strongly agreed
- Establish enhanced early years settings in the private voluntary and independent sector in the north east and west of the city – 81% agreed or strongly agreed

2.10 Respondents were also asked if there were any other issues we needed to consider. This feedback has been themed as below:

2.11 Early Years: The importance of early intervention and the need to Increase support for nurseries with the transition of children with SEND moving from early years setting to school was a key issue raised. Additional support for early years children will be considered as part of the high needs review;

2.12 Specialist provision: Feedback supported the need for more provision for pupils with SLCN/ASD and welcomed the development of resource bases.

“There needs to be more schools developing resource bases and especially more places for students in secondary schools.”

Comments were made however about the need for the new SLD free school to include pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) that a new free school was also needed for pupils with ASD/SLCN and more provision was needed for pupils with mental health needs and anxiety. Provision for pupils with ASD/SLCN and mental health needs is being developed as part of the strategy however no dedicated specialist provision is proposed for children with MLD only at this time, as Hull’s mainstream schools have a great deal of experience and success in meeting the needs of pupils with MLD.

2.13 Mainstream provision: The SEND Sufficiency Strategy focuses on ensuring there are sufficient specialist school places, however a number of comments were made about mainstream provision, particularly relating to the need for staff training and development and outreach support.

- *“There are a large number of children for whom a special school place is not appropriate but without specialist teaching and support they would find it difficult to access mainstream school”;*
- *“It is good to create more specialist provisions but every child should have the right to access mainstream education if parents want to. Mainstream education should be therefore more inclusive”;*
- *“Compulsory staff training and CPD for all mainstream primary and secondary schools staff working with SEND pupils”.*

These comments will be passed onto the lead for the SEND workforce development workstream which is an area of work led by the Learning Partnership, a partnership of senior education leaders across the city.

2.14 Post 16: The overwhelming feedback in this area referred to the need for more choice of provision post 16.

- *“I think there needs to be more provision to be put into 16 plus/ adult services, colleges to support supported internships and other employer based schemes.”*

The strategy will include the need to develop partnerships with local further education providers and work to promote the employment of young people with SEND especially via a wider range of supported internships and other employer-based schemes.

3 Next steps

3.1 The feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Strategy which will be published early in the New Year. A summary of the feedback received and how it will be used will be published along with the final version of the strategy.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are invited to comment on the draft strategy which is at **Appendix 1**.

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Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: None